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ABSTRACT

This practicum involved the development of an 8-month inservice training program to give teachers (N=71) at a rural high school basic information concerning the mainstreaming of students with learning disabilities (LD) as well as to influence their attitudes toward inclusion of such students in their classes. Initially, teachers were confused about the LD, EH (emotionally handicapped), and EMH (educable mentally handicapped) classifications. They had little understanding of requirements of Public Law 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act), individual education plans, classroom modifications allowed to special needs students, nor their legal responsibilities. Teachers expressed feelings of inadequacy about teaching students with learning disabilities. The inservice plan was designed to be spread over time, using parts of regular faculty meetings as well as mailbox handouts and contests. Results were positive, with gains in basic knowledge ranging from 40 to 80 percent. Positive attitude changes were also documented. The participating teachers also evaluated the inservice training very positively. Appendixes include the survey of teacher attitudes and knowledge, a survey of LD students' current level of modifications, sample mailbox handouts, and the inservice evaluation form. (Contains 100 references.) (DB)

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# Developing and Implementing an Inservice Program Designed to Change Teacher Attitudes Toward Mainstreamed Learning Disabled Students at the Secondary Level

by

Josephine T. Thompson

Cluster 37

A Practicum II Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Richard E. Manning

Richard E. Manning, ~~Principal~~
Hardee Senior High School
Rt. 1, Box 420, Altman Rd. S.
Wauchula, Florida 33873

September 1, 1992

This practicum was submitted by Josephine T. Thompson under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

9/10/92
Date of Final
Approval of Report

Mary Staggs, Ed.D.
Mary Staggs, Ph.D., Adviser

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....iv

LIST OF APPENDICES.....v

ABSTRACT.....vi

PERMISSION STATEMENT.....vii

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION.....1

Description of Work Setting and Community.....1
Writer's Work Setting and Role.....2

II. STUDY OF THE PROBLEM.....4

Problem Description.....4
Problem Documentation.....4
Causative Analysis.....6
Relationship of the Problem to the Literature.....7

III. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS.....16

Goals and Expectations.....16
Behavioral Objectives.....17
Measurement of Objectives.....18

IV. SOLUTION STRATEGY.....20

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions....20
Description of Selected Solution.....23
Report of Action Taken.....25

V. RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS.....32

Results.....32
Discussion.....37
Recommendations.....41
Dissemination.....42

REFERENCES.....43

LIST OF APPENDICES

Page

A SURVEY OF TEACHER ATTITUDES AND KNOWLEDGE OF LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS.....53

B SURVEY OF LD STUDENTS CURRENT LEVEL OF MODIFICATIONS.....55

C MAILBOX HANDOUTS.....58

D INSERVICE EDUCATION EVALUATION FORM.....77

ABSTRACT

Developing and Implementing an Inservice Program Designed to Change Teacher Attitudes Toward Mainstreamed Learning Disabled Students at the Secondary Level. Thompson, Josephine T., 1992: Practicum II Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors: Inservice/Workshop/Seminar/Learning Disabilities/LD/ADD/EH/EMH/IEP/Special Education/Special Needs Pupils/Teacher Attitudes/Resistance to Change/ Stressors/Stress/P.L. 94-142/Modifications/Consultation/ Staff Development.

An eight-months-long inservice training program was developed to give teachers basic information and to influence their attitudes for positive change regarding mainstreamed students with learning disabilities. The high school arena traditionally resists special needs students who are expected to adapt to existing structures or be taught in a separate contained environment. Some teachers were openly hostile to the placement of special students in their classes and few made any modifications for pupils.

Teacher comments often indicated the confusion of LD, EH, and EMH classifications. Teachers had little or no understanding of P.L. 94-142, of individual education plans (IEPs), of classroom modifications allowed to special needs students, nor of their legal responsibilities. Teachers felt inadequately prepared to teach students with learning disabilities and seemed to feel if they were resistant, the students would then be scheduled to more yielding teachers.

Inservice training spread over time has been recommended over one-shot seminars, and programs need to be stimulating and fun, to have incentives and require involvement. The inservice plan used small amounts of time in regular faculty meetings, and relied on mailbox handouts and contests. Results were positive with gains in basic knowledge ranging from 40 to 80 percent improvement. Ending ratings by the faculty indicate 34 percent of the faculty felt the inservice program to be outstanding and 49 percent found it to be above average.

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9-1-92 Josephine Thompson

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### Description of Work Setting and Community

The ten-year-old high school in the setting is the only one in a rural county of cattle ranches, citrus groves, and vegetable crops, an area dependent upon seasonal migrant workers for the harvesting of fruits and vegetables. Although the entire range of socioeconomic levels is represented in the county, the predominant group is lower middle class. The conservative community has less than four thousand residents and serves as the county seat for a stable population of about eighteen thousand permanent residents.

The high school serves one thousand one hundred students including migrants from throughout the county in grades nine through twelve. The school population is predominantly white with ethnic breakdowns of 64.5 percent white, 11 percent black, 24 percent Hispanic, and .007 percent other races; four percent of the population is identified as learning disabled and have current individual education plans. The school has one principal, two assistant principals, two guidance counselors, a faculty of 71, clerical and tutorial staff of 26, custodial staff of 11, and food service workers

number 12. Feeder schools in the county are four elementary schools and one middle school serving grades six through eight.

The ten-year accreditation review for the Southern Association of Colleges and High Schools occupied the faculty during the 1991-92 school year. Each faculty member served on two committees during the self-study and committee reports were presented to the entire faculty at early morning meetings scheduled for precisely that purpose.

## Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer was one of two senior high school guidance counselors on eleven-month contract, held a master's degree in guidance and counseling, and had thirty years experience in education. Duties included scheduling and advising students, arranging and supervising a variety of tests, counseling and consultation related to test results, consulting with parents and with teachers, dispensing college and financial aid information, coordinating dual-enrollment programs with a nearby community college, and the staffing of all special education students, in addition to personal counseling with the school population.

Other responsibilities include writing frequent columns for the weekly county newspaper that were designed to keep parents and students informed of

scholarships, deadlines, tests, and other happenings of note at the high school. Arranging and administering college entrance exams, both the American College Test and the Scholastic Achievement Test, on eight Saturdays during the year was another responsibility. The writer served on the steering committee for the Teachers as Advisors program and was responsible for the scheduling and tracking of all students in that program and, like other staff members, served as advisor to a group of twenty students in weekly meetings.

# CHAPTER II

# STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

## Problem Description

The problem needing improvement was both attitudinal and informational on the part of the secondary teachers. The high school faculty as a whole were highly resistant to the special needs of students with identified learning disabilities. Teachers planned little or no modifications in class assignments or in testing, resisted suggestions, and made deprecatory statements about the efforts and abilities of students with learning disabilities. Teacher comments often indicated the confusion of learning disabled, emotionally handicapped, and educable mentally retarded classifications. Teachers had little or no understanding of Public Law 94-142, of individualized educational plans, and of their role in those plans. Some teachers were openly hostile and resistant to the placement of special needs pupils in their classes.

## Problem Documentation

Evidence of the problem was supported by observations of the writer, notes saved over a period of six years, interviews with administrators and faculty members, and the grades of mainstreamed students with

learning disabilities (LD). Teachers and parents of special needs pupils have complained to counselors with consistency about certain teachers. Frequently heard comments from teachers indicated a common belief that students with learning disabilities were lazy, and modifications were unfair to other students and would not be allowed. Notes saved by the writer indicate written requests to avoid certain teachers, repeated requests to teachers to allow modifications for a student with a learning disability, and frustration on the part of the specific learning disabilities teacher.

Dr. Irvin Howard, Nova University professor, commented: "There still remains awful uncertainty in identification, support, strategies, and curriculum ...[and the LD] label is still too unclear to too many teachers who are unsure of how to assist these kids" (personal communication, April 26, 1991). Excessive numbers of failing grades for pupils with learning disabilities from teachers have been documented with percentages as high as fifty percent in the math, science, and shop departments. Richard Manning, principal at the school of the writer, commented: "Our teachers in general have a total lack of perception of what LD is and is not, and lack an understanding of the laws relating to exceptionalities. They do not know how to deal with exceptional students in the classroom, and

seem to feel that if they are uncooperative, the students will then be scheduled to more yielding teachers" (personal communication, July 22, 1991).

## Causative Analysis

Secondary teachers feel they must prepare students for a diploma by adhering to a rigid curriculum, and adapting to special needs pupils is unfair to hard-working students. Teachers are uninformed about federal, state, and district laws and procedures relating to students with handicaps, and are particularly uninformed about Public Law 94-142. Many teachers do not understand individualized educational plans (IEPs) and have no knowledge of their roles or responsibilities relative to the IEP. Most teachers feel they were not trained in the area of special education and lack the knowledge with which to assist special needs pupils. Six principals in six years, and no inservice training programs dealing with mainstreaming, have resulted in no insistence on the responsibilities of teachers for special education pupils.

Today's teachers are highly stressed by the once routine job of teaching youth. Stressors in the workplace include paperwork, budget restrictions, technology demands, an ever increasing array of new programs, the demand for accountability, and a rapidly changing clientele of students.

## Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A review of current literature gives evidence of teacher uncertainties in working with students with learning disabilities. Teachers tend to ask about what to expect, how to evaluate fairly, and question fair practices in relation to their other students (Dilev & Meloy, 1990; Hudson, Morsink, Branscom, & Boone, 1987; Lundeberg & Svien, 1988).

The learning disabled have a "vast heterogeneity" that precludes any recommendations for "highly specific competency statements" (Hudson, et al, 1987, p. 234). Definitions issued by the National Joint Committee for Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) refer to LD as a "generic term" and a "heterogeneous group of disorders" indicating the difficulty of accurate subtyping (Hammill, 1990). In his review of the literature, Torgeson (1986) found research over the last two and one-half decades to be complicated by changes in theoretical models regarding the etiology, diagnosis, assessment, and intervention procedures with students exhibiting signs of a learning disability. Definitions and research related to attention deficit disorders are only rudimentarily developed and there remains much controversy regarding the distinction between, or association of, learning disabilities (L.D.) and attention deficit disorders (ADD) (Atkins & Pelham, 1991; Cantwell & Baker, 1991; Cherkes-

Julkowski & Stolzenberg, 1991; Dykman and Ackerman, 1991; Epstein, Shaywitz, Shaywitz, & Woolston, 1991; Fletcher, Morris, & Francis, 1991; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 1991). Ceci and Baker (1989) suggest that much remains to be learned and a concept that is both empirical and theoretical must be developed for optimal educational advancements.

A belief has existed that LD differences dissipated with age and maturity, but college students experience the same problems as high school students with reading difficulty, listening to lectures, taking accurate notes, and writing papers. They have poor study skills, poor time management, and difficulty completing tasks; in addition, social imperceptibility and a lack of response to verbal cues have been noted (Dalke, 1988). Schaeffer, Zigmond, Kerr, and Farra (1990) also noted that poor study habits and poor grades were a result of disorganization, a trait that continues into adult life. In his work with the Carolina Learning Disabilities Project, McKinney (1989) has supported the view that "LD is a chronic, seriously-handicapping condition that results in persistent underachievement" and is not easily remediated (p. 148). Deshler (1978) noted that a dominating assumption of the early years of research was that learning disabled children could be cured but it became apparent that the impact of the learning

disability was not substantially altered over time, an observation suggesting that "either LD are highly resistant to remediation, or the interventions employed lacked the power to eliminate the condition or minimize its consequences" (p. 10). Farmer and Laing (1987) concur that attempts to help the learning disabled overcome their handicapping condition have not been very successful. Leyser (1990) recently stressed the need for greater dissemination of information and opportunities for school faculties to participate in activities and programs that offered information about learning disabilities.

Many of the students identified as learning disabled are indistinguishable from low-achieving students in regular classrooms (Ysseldyke, Algozzine, Shinn, and McGue, 1982) which not only emphasizes the states' varying requirements for LD identification but the need for teachers to increase their repertoire of skills. Shepard (1987) expressed concern about "runaway overidentification" (p. 329) and felt half the children called learning disabled were misidentified, needing help in school, but not warranting the label of handicapped. Marks (1990) made a poignant point by commenting that emotional problems can masquerade as cognitive ones and depression may appear to be a learning disability. At least half the LD children served are mildly handicapped

and could be described as slow learners, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students, high absentee children, or frequent movers according to Shepard, Smith, and Vojir (1983). Often the diagnosis of LD is made by an examiner not well-trained, not on the basis of the Office of Education definition, but on the severe discrepancy between school performance and ability (Oliver, Cole, & Hollingsworth, 1991). Stainback and Stainback (1984) made the point that "the only reason for eligibility criteria is if some people are entitled to assistance and others are not" (p. 105).

Many children with LD experience social dificulties in school and are at high risk for adjustment in later life; these children are rejected, have lower self-esteem, have fewer friends, and exhibit more overall classroom behavior problems than non-LD pupils (Bursuck, 1989; Gresham & Elliott, 1989; Stiliadis & Wiener, 1989; Stone & LaGreca, 1990). From an early age, LD children can exhibit a complex picture of cognitive and behaviorial difficulties that can affect their academic performance and social acceptance (Felton & Woods, 1989; McKinney, 1989; Toro, Weissberg, Guare, & Liebenstein, 1990). The learning disabled, particularly boys, display adjustment problems in addition to academic difficulties and may think of themselves as unable to cope (Konstantareas & Homatidis, 1989; Mahan & Johnson, 1983).

Uninformed and resistant teachers contribute to painful experiences of the learning disabled in high school where there is no simple approach to teaching students with disparate disabilities and the priority is the welfare of the many (Boucher, 1981; Lieberman, 1985; Shultz, 1980; Wagner, 1990). Change frightens people because loss of one kind or another always accompanies change, therefore resistance always occurs when individuals are required to alter established behaviors (Anderson & Stewart, 1983). Davis (1989) found regular education teachers resistant toward integrating students with handicaps into regular education classrooms, sometimes exhibiting outright hostility. "Teachers in traditional high schools are, as a group, unresponsive to individual differences among students and are unwilling to accomodate learning disabled adolescents," according to the research of Zigmond, Levin, and Laurie (1985, p. 535). The basic assumption of most regular teachers is that a handicapped student must either adjust to the existing structure of the secondary school, or be taught in a separate, self-contained environment (Heller, 1981; Wimmer, 1981).

Studies by Baker and Zigmond (1990) revealed that most teachers lack effective means for serving an increasingly diverse population of mainstreamed students. According to Thompson, White, and Morgan (1982), the

reluctance of the regular education teacher to accept special education pupils may be due less to issues of manageability than time. In a study by Dedrick, Hawkes, and Smith (1981), lack of time was cited by all teachers as a major contributor to stress. A study by Halpern and Benz (1987) identified three fundamental problems of mainstreaming students with learning disabilities: (1) lack of pupils' entry-level skills, (2) lack of teachers' skills to modify instruction for LD pupils, and (3) regular teachers simply do not want to teach LD students. They further stated that such negative attitudes were not likely to change as long "as participation in special education is an add-on to their other responsibilities without compensation or reduction in teaching load" (p. 128).

The findings of Seidenberg and Koenigsberg (1990) supported the idea that knowledge acquired in a special education setting is neither generalized nor reinforced by mainstream regular teachers who do not perceive themselves as providing instruction to LD learners as well as special education teachers can. Mainstreaming is more likely to work if special educators work and plan in a consultant or cooperative manner with regular educators (Iwler, Steczak, & Marco, 1983), and increased collaboration should focus on regular class intervention strategies (Houch, Geller, & Engelhard, 1988). Moore and

Fine (1978) maintained that mainstreaming should never begin with unaccepting teachers and Jolly (1990) cautioned that regular teachers should have the strong, coordinated backing of special support personnel. Having regular teachers work with special educators of experience is a productive way of making mainstreaming effective and the support tends to develop teacher confidence (Williams & Algozzine, 1979) as well as lessen the mentality of "them against us" (Stainback & Stainback, 1984).

Serving mainstreamed handicapped students increases the stress of regular education teachers who lack training in working with special education students (Harrington & Morrison, 1981; Houck, Geller, & Engelhard, 1988; Tindal, Parker, & Germann, 1990). Increased professional responsibilities are stressful and can lead to teacher burnout, and certainly a higher teacher/pupil ratio will produce greater pressure and emotional stress (Weiskopf, 1980). Halpern and Benz (1987) do not foresee a change in negative attitudes of regular education teachers as long as teaching a special education student is an "add-on to their other responsibilities without compensation or reduction in teaching load" (p. 128). Gans (1987) found the strongest predictor for either regular or special education teachers' willingness to accept students with disabilities to be the <u>number</u> of

pupils rather than the strength of the teachers' feelings about teaching students with handicaps.

Paget and Reynolds (1984) stated that learning disabled students have difficulties with academic learning that differentiate them from students who are not disabled, and tend to experience greater stress in school. Rubenzer (1988) referred to achievement stress as a widespread invisible disability that dims ability and may result in "academic failure, behavioral and emotional problems, drug abuse, health problems, and even suicide" (p. 1). He further stated that reducing stress significantly improved reading, arithmetic, spelling, handwriting, and attentional skills. Brown (1977), Frey (1980) and Lupin (1977) found relaxation training increased children's capacity to attend to information more selectively and without distraction. Omizo and Michael (1982) found decreased impulsivity and increased attention to task after relaxation training for hyperactive boys. It is logical to deduce that teachers need to be taught how to create low-stress classrooms, and how to be helpful to stressed students by providing positive feedback, structure, a personal sense of control, and by being accessible (Barker, 1987; Whitman, Spendlove, & Clark, 1987).

Students with special needs have long been considered the province of special education teachers by

regular education teachers who decry their lack of competence and training in the area (Bilden, 1985; Dunn, 1991). According to Larson (1975), it is commonly thought that the special educator will correct the diagnosed deficiency and "the regular educator can no longer be held accountable for the lack of school success" (p. 3). In Shepard's (1987) opinion, special education educators may have "a greater repertoire of skills for coping with learning difficulties, but these are the very skills regular teachers should acquire" (p. 328). Pattavina and Ramirez (1980) noted that an effective teacher would not rely on a single strategy or one theoretical approach:

> If one truly wishes to base their teaching behaviors on the learning needs of children, then it's imperative that a wide variety of instructional strategies are available in a teacher's repertoire of skills (p. 19).

# CHAPTER III

# ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

## Goals and Expectations

The goal of this practicum was to expand the faculty's knowledge about learning disabled students and to promote an understanding of faculty responsibilities in meeting the needs of learning disabled students. It was expected that expanding the knowledge base of the faculty regarding the characteristics and special needs of learning disabled students would change teacher attitudes toward those students, and understanding the learning disabled (LD), emotionally handicapped (EH), and educable mentally handicapped (EMH) classifications of handicapped students would lessen confusion of the students and develop awareness of their differing characteristics and needs.

Developing an understanding of Public Law 94-142 and its impact on educators and special needs children was expected to result in changed teacher attitudes regarding their legal responsibilities, as well as an awareness of their legal liabilities. Developing teacher's knowledge of individual educational plans (IEPs) and their responsibilities toward those legal documents was expected to bring about a change in teacher's

understanding of their roles. It was expected that a knowledge of curriculum modifications legally permitted for identified students with learning disabilities would result in more class assignment and test modifications. Recognition of the stress experienced by learning disabled students in the academic setting was expected to create greater understanding of the energy and effort expended to do the same work as a nonhandicapped student.

## Behavioral Objectives

The major focus of this practicum was to change teacher attitudes and perceptions of learning disabled students. The objectives were that the participants would: (1) develop an understanding of characteristics and needs of students classified as learning disabled (LD), emotionally handicapped (EH), and educable mentally handicapped (EMH); (2) understand Public Law 94-142 as it impacts handicapped students in the mainstream of regular education; (3) understand the purpose of, and legal responsibilities for, the student's individualized educational plan (IEP); (4) understand and implement appropriate curriculum modifications; and (5) recognize and understand the daily stress with which learning disabled students must cope in an educational setting.

Expanding the faculty's knowledge base was an integral component of the planned program and was to be accomplished through faculty meetings and through mailbox

handouts. Prizes and contests were planned to initiate and to maintain faculty interest.

The use of modifications for assignments and for testing was expected to increase. Since many of the accommodations for students with learning disabilities are helpful to other students in a classroom, an effort was made to expand teachers' repertoires of skills and good classroom instruction techniques for all pupils.

It was anticipated that more teachers would willingly accept learning disabled students into their classrooms and that there would be an increase in communication between teachers of exceptional students and mainstream teachers regarding modifications. A decrease in the number of complaints from parents, from students, and from exceptional student teachers about mainstream teachers was expected to occur. While all these indicators are not measurable objectives, documentation through observation is reported.

## Measurement of Objectives

An attitude survey developed by the writer (see Appendix A) attempted to measure attitudes and level of understanding of the faculty. At the end of the implementation period, the same instrument was again administered to evaluate changes in teacher attitudes and knowledge.

The use of modifications for assignments and for testing was expected to increase. A survey in checklist form (see Appendix B) was developed by the writer to determine modifications in use for class assignments and for testing of pupils with learning disabilities. The survey was designed to be used with the LD students as a pre- and post-measure to ascertain the level of use of modifications for pupils identified as learning disabled.

A diary was kept by the writer throughout the practicum implementation period in order to keep an accurate record of deviations from the calendar plan as well as comments, successes, and failures. Indicators not measurable for this practicum experience are increased communication between mainstream and exceptional teachers, decreased complaints regarding mainstream teachers, efforts made to reduce the stress of students with learning disabilities, and improved faculty acceptance of LD students into classrooms.

# CHAPTER IV

# SOLUTION STRATEGY

## Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem perceived by the writer was the lack of knowledge among the faculty of P. L. 94-142, their legal responsibilities as defined by law, and their perception of the LD classification, LD student characteristics, and special needs. Teachers have little or no understanding of their role in the IEP for special needs pupils and often confuse the LD, EH, and EMH classifications.

Wagner (1990) advocated alternative grading policies for mainstreamed learning disabled students and support services for their teachers. Her longitudinal study revealed virtually all schools had special education teachers providing consultative services to regular education teachers, and about half the schools provided special materials for mainstreamed LD students. Inservice training, classroom aides, and reduced class sizes were far less common.

Tindal, Parker, and Germann (1990) found mainstream consultation agreements not very effective for providing service to secondary students with learning disabilities. However, they advocated vigilant monitoring of the students on the part of the special education consultant.

Margolis and McGettigan (1988) present consultation as a critical resource and believe it important enough to incorporate "into schedules as a priority item, rather than simply added to long lists of competing obligations" (p. 20). Hughes and Falk (1981) present the benefits of consultation by defining it as a helping process where two professionals jointly explore a problem for possible solutions. According to Shepard (1987), the special education teachers usually possess a repertoire of skills that should be shared with regular education teachers.

Developing awareness is a "viable strategy for promoting behavior change among teachers" (p. 139) according to Siperstein and Goding (1985). Donaldson (1980) recommended the most predictable method of attitude modification as structured presentations of handicapped persons, using disabled and non-disabled of equal status, and carefully structured simulations of disabilities. He also found video presentations to be effective tools for changing attitudes.

Although traditional discussion courses are economical, easily implemented, and better than nothing, inservice training that provided contact with children and lecture-discussions about them were more advantageous relative to attitudes and behavioral intentions, according to Naor and Milgram (1980). Jarrow (1987) and Leyser and Abrams (1982) suggested that short-term

programs have been so ineffective in changing attitudes that inservice training over time is strongly indicated.

Gans (1987) believed inservice activities within the daily routine permitted emphasis on day-to-day procedures that encouraged compliance and provided greater support for attitudinal change. Remer (1984) provided several suggestions for effective workshops that focused on interaction between the presenter and the audience: "It is less important to communicate the 'dry facts' than what the audience finds sensible and useful and what they might remember and use later" (p. 248). He believed the key to motivating people was in having them do something, not just hear about it. Margolis and McGettigan (1988) suggested that many inservice programs fail because of the lack of incentives for teacher attendance and participation.

Teachers have always faced times of stress and have dealt with degrees of stress. Many articles on teacher stress identified stressors (Cichon & Koff, 1980; Dedrick, Hawkes, & Smith, 1981; Fimian, Pierson, & McHardy, 1986; Hawkes & Dedrick, 1983; Morsink, Blackhurst, & Williams, 1979; Olson & Matuskey, 1982) but only four suggested means of alleviation, including exercise, recreation, and peer support (Johnson, Gold, & Vickers, 1982; Lemley, 1981; Remer, 1984; Weiskopf, 1980). Both adults and children differ in their skills

for coping with stress, and those can vary according to recent history of stress. Adjusting abilities need to rest awhile after coping with stress, according to Duncan (1983). Barker (1987) offered advice to teachers on creating low-stress classrooms and teaching stress relievers such as test-taking tips to students. Teachers can be helpful to stressed students by providing structure and by being accessible, according to Whitman, Spendlove, and Clark (1987). Rubenzer's (1988) studies on stress management indicate that reducing stress significantly improves attentional skills in students with learning disabilities.

## Description of Selected Solution

Although incentives and compensations such as reduced class size and classroom aides were beyond the power base of the writer, the planned inservice program with its incentives and compensations had full approval of administrators. According to Dilev and Meloy (1990) and Lundeberg and Svien (1988), instruction to teachers regarding the general characteristics of exceptionalities, demonstrated effective teaching methods and behavior management strategies, and a knowledge of Public Law 94-142 are essential for the service of students with learning disabilities. These authors emphasize that visits between regular and special

education teachers and an established in-school network to address daily problems satisfy a critical need. Additionally, faculty inservice programs should be positive, knowledgeable, intellectually invigorating, and fun, with the active involvement of participants in the inservice program. An environmental approach to improving faculty attitudes has been proven to be beneficial in that inservice workshops within the daily routine and during prime time permits emphasis on day-to-day procedures and provides greater support for attitudinal change (Gans, 1987; Ensminger, 1976).

Donaldson (1980) found a structured presentation of persons with handicaps to be the most predictable mold for attitudinal modification with positive change occurring when exposure is powerful enough to change a stereotype by either "significantly reducing discomfort, uneasiness, or uncertainty on the part of the nonhandicapped and/or presenting enough information to contradict the presently held stereotype" (p. 510). Williams and Algozzine (1979) found teacher attitudes toward mainstreamed special needs pupils to depend on the severity of the handicapping condition as well as the support services available to teachers.

Leyser and Abrams (1982) maintain that workshops and seminars do not seem to be successful in modifying social

distance attitudes of teachers, indicating the need for more prolonged and intensive training programs. Bernal and Torres (1990) also recommend staff development spread over several years in systematic stages. In the words of Bailey, Gable, and Hendrickson (1989) cited in Cavallaro, Stowitschek, George, and Stowitschek (1980):

> Authorities underscore the importance of the evaluation of inservice training, evaluation that not only verifies the effectiveness of training but also charts a course for future staff development activities (p. 8).

Report of Action Taken

The inservice training was planned with an eye toward liveliness, interest, and involvement, and was as positive as possible as recommended by Lundeberg and Svien (1988). At every opportunity, the three special education teachers were presented to the faculty as specialists available for consultation according to the suggestions of Dilev and Meloy (1990), Hughes and Falk (1981), Margolis and McGettigan (1988), and Tindal, Parker, and Germann (1990). Emphasis was also placed on the use of teaching tips with unidentified students in the classroom who may have similar handicaps as indicated by Felton and Wood (1989), Marks (1990), Shepard (1987), Shepard, Smith, and Vojir (1983), and Ysseldyke, Algozzine, Shinn, and McGue (1982).

Donaldson's (1980) and Remer's (1984) ideas on workshop presentations have been a guide, and the inservice training was in the work setting as recommended by Gans (1987). Harrington and Morrison's (1981) ideas on test modifications were presented on one of the mailbox handouts, Wagner's (1990) alternative grading policies were mentioned with caution, and Barker's (1987) ideas on reducing classroom stress were shared. The inservice plan had many incentives for teacher participation and utilized a variety of approaches for dispensing information and stimulating conversation among teachers, as can be observed from the calendar of events that follows.

MONTH ONE: NOVEMBER, 1991

WEEK ONE: Faculty introduced to planned inservice procedure; pre-test assessment instrument used for gathering baseline data. Posters placed at strategic points in school asking teachers What is an IEP?

WEEK TWO: Mailbox Handout One asks Could you write an IEP? and is accompanied by contest rules for a steak dinner. Bright, attention-grabbing fluorescent paper is used for mailbox handouts.

WEEK THREE: Extra-long poster done by computer is placed at teacher sign-in desk, declares

IEPs ARE IN THE LIBRARY. Samples of IEPs with no pupil names are on a display table in the library. Best written explanations of IEPs due at week's end.

WEEK FOUR: Special education teachers act as judges to choose winning explanation of IEPs.

MONTH TWO: DECEMBER, 1991

WEEK ONE: Mailbox Handout Two shares several good explanations of IEPs; winner of steak dinner announced at faculty meeting and IEPs are discussed for five minutes.

WEEK TWO: Planned Puzzle Pages are deleted due to the pressures of time. The accreditation self-study places everyone under stress. The planned movie showing is postponed.

WEEK THREE: Mailbox Handout Three looks like a Holiday Greeting on red paper: The greatest gift that can be given a learning disabled student by a teacher is the gift of time.

WEEK FOUR: Mailbox Handout Four: The ACT and the SAT exams allow time extensions if IEP is current--quadruple time!!!

MONTH THREE: JANUARY, 1992

WEEK ONE: (actually second week in January) A powerful film entitled "How Difficult

Can This Be?" (PBS Video, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314-1698) is introduced to faculty, a ten-minute segment is viewed, and contest explained.

WEEK TWO: Mailbox Handout Five announces SHOW TIMES for the film and explains the contest.

WEEK THREE: The film is shown three times during a teacher workday; drawing for dinner for two at a four-star restaurant at day's end.

WEEK FOUR: Mailbox Handout Six attempts to explain what LD is not and to define what it is.

MONTH FOUR: February, 1992

WEEK ONE: Missed scheduled faculty meeting due to illness.

WEEK TWO: Mailbox Handout Seven indicates some may think LD means "lazy" and "dumb."

WEEK THREE: Mailbox Handout Eight indicates LD are discouraged with risk-taking knocked out.

WEEK FOUR: Mailbox Handout Nine bluntly states that motivation is not the key.

MONTH FIVE: March, 1992

WEEK ONE: Faculty presentation emphasizes test and classroom modifications.

WEEK TWO: Mailbox Handout Ten summarizes test construction and management tips.

WEEK THREE: Mailbox Handout Eleven emphasizes that LD students do not volunteer, may become class clowns, or demonstrate passive withdrawal.

WEEK FOUR: Mailbox Handout Twelve lists 20 modifications suitable for any special education student.

MONTH SIX: April, 1992

WEEK ONE: (actually second week due to Spring Break) Teacher/mother of hearing-disabled senior presents emotional speech to faculty after their visit to Gallaudet University; Makes heavy emphasis on list of 20 Class Modifications, reproducing them and handing them out again in faculty mtg.

WEEK TWO: Mailbox Handout Thirteen deals with distractible vs. short attention span.

WEEK THREE: Mailbox Handout Fourteen deals with the storage and retrieval systems of the brain; problems with learning disabled.

WEEK FOUR: Mailbox Handout Fifteen deals with the differences between vision and perception.

MONTH SEVEN: May, 1992

WEEK ONE: Re-visit modifications that teachers should seek to use during faculty meeting; emphasize consultation with special teacher;

drawing for 3 weeks of yard duty for teacher who writes modifications used regularly on index card and drops in box.

WEEK TWO: Mailbox Handout Sixteen re-visits the alphabet soup of acronyms, provides glossary.

WEEK THREE: Mailbox Handout Seventeen deals with the myth and the reality of special education teachers expertise and emphasizes consultation.

WEEK FOUR: Collect envelopes with summer addresses of teachers so that practicum can be continued by mail and finalized during the August pre-school week. This move became necessary due to the heavy demands on the writer's time and the faculty's time during the year of SACS Accreditation.

MONTH EIGHT: JUNE, 1992

Mailed two pages of teaching tips and class management techniques for pupils with special needs to the teaching faculty along with personal greetings.

MONTH NINE: JULY, 1992

Mailed four pages of suggested classroom accomodations for dealing with specific

behaviors of children with attentional disorders with accompanying personal note to colleagues.

MONTH TEN: AUGUST, 1992

Two-hour presentation to faculty with fifteen minute presentation on legal aspects of P. L. 94-142 by the county school board attorney. Using overhead transparencies of each handout previously used, the writer spoke to the faculty, then showed movie How Difficult? again.

The seventeen mailbox handouts were saved by only eleven teachers for the prizes (movie coupons) given out on the last day of school. Mention of this fact drew laughter from the faculty in August as the point was stressed that pupils with learning disabilities are often disorganized and have great difficulty keeping notebooks required in some classes.

The principal placed the ten-minute inservice presentation on the agenda for each monthly faculty meeting. All of the drawings and prizes stimulated conversation among the faculty members, and served as a focal point for the message presented. One young teacher asked, "What in the world is an IEP?" at his mailbox in November and an assistant principal gave an explanation.

# CHAPTER V

## RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Results

Teacher attitudes toward students with special needs are perennial concerns in the writer's work setting. Special education teachers wanted their students scheduled into the mainstream with teachers they had found to be caring and concerned, which then overburdened those teachers with large numbers of special needs pupils. Unsympathetic teachers made no modifications in the presentation of the lessons or in testing of the special students, often refusing to allow a student to take a test with his special teacher.

A high degree of turnover in administrative positions during the last few years resulted in little or no support to exceptional student education. The three special education teachers had tried with no success to present their programs to the faculty in a one-shot seminar, and had been requesting some type of inservice program that was required for all faculty members.

One objective of the practicum was to develop an understanding of characteristics and needs of students classified as learning disabled (LD), emotionally handicapped (EH), and educable mentally handicapped (EMH). Although the writer presented basic information

for teachers to be aware of all exceptionalities, concentration was on the learning disability group because the hidden disability and variety of disorders make them the most difficult group to understand.

The same survey of teacher attitudes and knowledge of learning disabled students used at the beginning of the inservice program was used at the end. Without bluntly stating so and destroying the validity of the survey instrument, the writer hoped that the faculty would grasp the concept that all the words and phrases on the survey could be applicable to pupils with learning disabilities. In November of 1991, only three teachers realized that fact; by August of 1992, fourteen teachers demonstrated their understanding of the heterogeneity of these exceptional students by circling almost all words. Thirty-three teachers also showed their understanding by circling the phrase "hard to spot in class."

Three pairs of phrases showed dramatic differences:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2. | lazy | diligent |
| 14. | not so intelligent | normally intelligent |
| 15. | easily identifiable | hard to spot in class |

In November, most of the faculty circled <u>lazy</u> and <u>not so intelligent</u>, indicating they held the opinion that LD meant lazy and dumb. By August, the majority of the faculty were circling the three phrases to the right.

A second objective was to develop an understanding of Public Law 94-142 as it impacts handicapped students in the mainstream of regular education. The law was mentioned briefly by the writer at each faculty meeting and the school board attorney spoke for fifteen minutes at the last meeting in August. He emphasized the rights of the students under this "mainstreaming" law and explained the liability to a teacher for failure to use modifications to assist the student in the acquisition of knowledge. He closed by remarking that the school board could not afford any teacher who refused to take P.L. 94-142 seriously.

Table 1 depicts the faculty's ability to define terms emphasized in the inservice program. Eighty percent of the faculty could accurately define P.L. 94-142 by the end of the inservice as compared to only twenty-one percent in the beginning.

Table 1

SURVEY OF TEACHER KNOWLEDGE

| | November 1991 | August 1992 |
|---|---|---|
| SLD | 17% | 87% |
| IEP | 40% | 85% |
| EH | 73% | 85% |
| EMH | 35% | 78% |
| 94-142 | 21% | 80% |

It is possible that one hundred percent of the faculty knew something of the law but some teachers did not make the effort to write definitions at the bottom of the survey form.

A third objective of the practicum was to develop understanding of individual educational plans known as IEPs. The first mailbox handouts dealt with the IEP and there were posters, signs, and displays around school. Not only teachers but students were asking, "Just what is an IEP?" Table 1 shows an improvement in knowledge from forty percent to eight-five percent of the faculty.

A fourth objective was to develop understanding and to encourage implementation of appropriate curriculum modifications. A list of twenty modifications were used for the twelfth mailbox handout and later reproduced and distributed by the two teachers who were parents of the senior honors student with a severe hearing impairment. The mother then spoke to the faculty for fifteen minutes about modifying and adapting instruction for any student who needs help in acquiring information.

A survey of LD students and the current level of modifications (see appendix B) was done in the beginning and at the end of the school year. In November, eighty percent of the teachers allowed LD students to take tests differently; by year's end, that percentage had increased to ninety-five. In November, forty percent of teachers

of LD pupils allowed them to shorten assignments; that percentage increased to seventy-five. Earlier, twenty-five percent of teachers allowed tape recording, and that increased to sixty percent.

In the fall, thirty percent of the teachers required a notebook which counted as a major grade. That number did not change. In November, eighty percent of teachers had LD students doing their copying from chalkboard or overhead projector; that percentage decreased to sixty-five and a variety of substitute methods were in use.

A fifth objective of the practicum was to develop an understanding of the frustration, anxiety, and tension of the LD student. The film, "How Difficult Can This Be?", did an excellent job on that point. Using the list of modifications the writer made an effort to impress upon teachers how daily stress could be lessened.

Table 2

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

| | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Organization, preparation | 51% | 40% | 7% | - | 2% |
| Consultant effectiveness | 55% | 34% | 9% | 2% | - |
| Quality personal involvement | 28% | 38% | 30% | 2% | 2% |
| Relevancy to personal needs | 30% | 49% | 17% | 4% | - |
| Application value | 38% | 47% | 13% | 2% | - |
| OVERALL RATING | 34% | 49% | 13% | 2% | 2% |

The 5 represents outstanding, 4 represents above average, 3 is adequate, 2 is inadequate, and 1 is poor. Eighty-three percent of the faculty rated the inservice program above average to outstanding. Some of their comments written on the same evaluation form follow:

> An excellent way to carry on a workshop!
>
> Handouts were helpful; easy to refer back to.
>
> This was an excellent workshop and I will use the information in my classroom.
>
> Well-organized, clear presentation and main points easy to follow.
>
> Excellent, well-planned study. You managed to get some people to participate who normally do not. Effective teaching style.
>
> Very helpful to understand what S.L.D. is all about.
>
> You broke down the area of ESE very effectively for teachers who knew very little of the subject. All areas of ESE were touched on in basic language for regular teachers to understand. Worksheets were wonderful, full of information.
>
> Most of us come in contact with LD students; information is certainly needed. Suggestions for accommodations very helpful. Video of adults treated as LD students was GREAT!
>
> Keep updating us on what you find.

The fluorescent paper used for attracting attention to the mailbox handouts drew one complaint:

> I realize the intent of the brightly colored pages. However, it got to the point where it was irritating. I wanted to throw the materials away before I even read them because they hurt my eyes.

## Discussion

Providing information in a game-like format over a period of several months was expected to influence teacher attitudes toward all special needs pupils but especially the students with learning disabilities so often regarded as just lazy. Unexpected assistance was received from one teacher who has a learning disability, and from two teachers who were parents of children who had identified learning disabilities and who had many unpleasant school experiences. The two faculty members who were parents of the senior student with a hearing impairment were invaluable in the success of the inservice practicum.

The powerful film, "How Difficult Can This Be?" was introduced to the writer by Dr. Vin Feudo in Summer Instruction classes, and has become quite famous. It has been the program for a meeting of Delta Kappa Gamma, the substance of a county inservice seminar for elementary special education teachers, the basis for an elementary school faculty meeting, and now resides in the library of the high school and can be checked out by teachers. One faculty member said that if she watched just five minutes of the film each morning, she would be a better teacher. Video presentations have been found to be powerful tools in changing attitudes, modeling, and simulations

(Donaldson, 1980; Ensminger, 1976; Schumaker & Clark, 1990; Tuller, 1976).

The film reinforced Skrtic's (1980) work with the University of Kansas Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities where he has found disapproval, lack of positive feedback and impatience will intensify the LD pupil's anxiety and frustration. As Lerner (1976) has stated, "emotional well-being and a favorable attitude are essential prerequisites before effective learning can take place" (p. 330) and teachers can be helpful to stressed students by providing positive feedback, structure, and accessibility (Whitman, Spendlove, & Clark, 1987).

Attitude change is difficult to measure and "factors contributing to positive shifts in attitudes have not been isolated" (Donaldson, 1980). It was suggested by Jarrow (1987) that it may be impossible to alter attitudes with a short-term approach, that perhaps change will occur only "through time and contact with the population" (p. 48). Morris, Leunberger, and Aksamit (1987) found multiple inservice contacts over time necessary to make an impact on faculty attitudes and knowledge and suggested the reason may be rooted in "the complex nature of learning disabilities" (p. 65). They also found that inservice training did not significantly improve faculty attitudes yet in the absence of training,

faculty attitudes declined--suggesting that attitudes are more resistant to change than knowledge. Schumaker and Clark (1990) also recommended scheduling training over a period of years and suggested that adopting new ideas "requires sustained efforts for a minimum of three to seven years" (p. 108). Although it appears that this inservice was successful in bringing about some change, long term effects remain to be seen.

The inservice plan attempted to address the five areas recommended by Dilev and Meloy (1990) and Tindall (1980): instruction regarding the characteristics of exceptionalities, demonstrated effective teaching methods, demonstrated behavior management techniques, established in-school network to address problems, consultative visits between regular and special educators, and understanding of curriculum modifications which will help the LD pupil succeed. The inservice training followed the in-school and prime-time recommendations of Ensminger (1976), Gans (1987), and Richmond and Smith (1990). The program was delivered by a familiar provider, with material related to the context in which teachers needed to use it, as recommended by Bernal and Torres (1990) and Richmond and Smith (1990).

Providing teachers with interventions and approaches to instruction lessens their anxiety and stress in dealing with special needs pupils. Those interventions

with the best chances of being put to use are easy to implement and benefit other children in the class (Dedrick, Hawkes, and Smith, 1981; Reisberg and Wolf, 1986; Weiskopf, 1980).

Flaws contributing to failure of inservice programs include one-shot approaches and lack of provisions for generalization and maintenance of skills (Bailey, Gable, & Hendrickson, 1989; Cavallaro, et al., 1980; Hammons, 1976; Joyce and Showers, 1980; Schumaker & Clark, 1990). To provide instruction at the practice and application levels, Schumaker and Clark (1990) and Showers (1985) recommended coaching by pairing teachers to problem-solve, share ideas, and provide feedback. Another reason for the failure of many inservice presentations is the lack of incentives for participants (Bailey, Gable, & Hendrickson, 1989; Banner, 1985; Larrivee, 1986; Margolis & McGettigan, 1988).

The inservice presentation for this practicum was spread over time, was short and lively at each presentation, had many contests and incentives, used video film for modeling and simulation, was school based and delivered by a familiar provider, and had the support of campus administration and special educators. Materials presented to the faculty can be accessed and reused with ease. Schumaker and Clark (1990) have suggested that inservice training spread over time gives

an atmosphere of continuity and administrative support, encouraging teachers to become actively engaged versus playing a waiting game until this, too, passes away.

## Recommendations

The inservice plan does not provide for application of skills, for generalization and maintenance over time. Attitudes appear to have improved but there is no plan for follow-up and further assessment. As Schumaker and Clark (1990) emphasized, teachers "need to practice using the new skills, they need to receive feedback as they implement the instruction with students, and they must receive instruction in how to apply their newly learned skills across a variety of situations" (p. 108-109).

One teacher commented on the last evaluation form: "It would have been helpful to provide more worksheets to do exercises on what was learned for practice and application." The writer strongly recommends more simulation, modeling, and role playing activities.

Recommendations for replication hinge on other stressors in the workplace. Due to the demands of the accreditation self-study and visiting team assessment of the school, some ideas planned were deleted from the inservice training. Deleted from the plans due to time constraints were two panel discussions: one with parents of LD students and another with the students themselves. The writer and the special teachers felt these would have

been powerful additions. The planned inservice presentation would have been far more effective if thirty minutes or an hour could have been scheduled with the faculty each meeting time. However, positive comments have been overheard among faculty members about the tremendous amount of information that has been distributed without wasting teachers' time.

One teacher wrote an objection to the use of bright fluorescent paper to attract attention to the mailbox handouts and complained that reading them hurt her eyes. Therefore, a project that replicates this idea should use paper in softer shades of colors.

## Dissemination

Many teachers have asked for information regarding the film used with this practicum, and for more copies of the mailbox handout sheets. Many have also asked to read the final report when it is completed. All materials have been provided to the librarian at the high school who will either check out materials or make copies as requested.

The writer plans to shorten the report and submit it for publication to several journals that typically are found in high school libraries. Plans are also being made to present the material as a workshop or seminar to schools in neighboring school districts, but based on this research, the writer will avoid one-shot seminars.

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# APPENDIX A

## SURVEY OF TEACHER ATTITUDES AND KNOWLEDGE OF LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS

CIRCLE THE WORDS THAT BEST DESCRIBE THE LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS THAT YOU HAVE KNOWN, OR HAD IN YOUR CLASSES:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | disorganized | organized |
| 2. | lazy | diligent |
| 3. | forgetful | remembers |
| 4. | distractible | attentive |
| 5. | overly active | normally passive |
| 6. | always prints | uses cursive writing |
| 7. | entertainer, clown | normally quiet |
| 8. | poor student | good student |
| 9. | generally messy | generally neat |
| 10. | poor reader | average reader |
| 11. | poor speller | average speller |
| 12. | clumsy, awkward | normally balanced |
| 13. | follows directions | directions a problem |
| 14. | not so intelligent | normally intelligent |
| 15. | easily identifiable | hard to spot in class |
| 16. | below-average classes | average classes |
| 17. | copies from board easily | much trouble copying |

BRIEFLY IDENTIFY IF YOU CAN:

SLD --

IEP --

EH --

EMH --

94-142 --

# APPENDIX B

## SURVEY OF LD STUDENTS' CURRENT LEVEL OF MODIFICATIONS

SURVEY OF LD STUDENTS

Student_____

1st Period_____

Y N Allowed to take tests differently?

Y N Allowed to shorten assignments?

Y N Allowed to tape record?

Y N Must copy from board (or overhead projector)?

Y N Must keep a notebook?

2nd Period_____

Y N Allowed to take tests differently?

Y N Allowed to shorten assignments?

Y N Allowed to tape record?

Y N Must copy from board (or overhead projector?

Y N Must keep a notebook?

3rd Period_____

Y N Allowed to take tests differently?

Y N Allowed to shorten assignments?

Y N Allowed to tape record?

Y N Must copy from board (or overhead projector)?

Y N Must keep a notebook?

4th Period_____

Y N Allowed to take tests differently?

Y N Allowed to shorten assignments?

Y N Allowed to tape record?

Y N Must copy from board (or overhead projector)?

Y N Must keep a notebook?

5th Period_____

Y N Allowed to take tests differently?

Y N Allowed to shorten assignments?

Y N Allowed to tape record?

Y N Must copy from board (or overhead projector)?

Y N Must keep a notebook?

6th Period_____

Y N Allowed to take tests differently?

Y N Allowed to shorten assignments?

Y N Allowed to tape record?

Y N Must copy from board (or overhead projector)?

Y N Must keep a notebook?

7th Period_____

Y N Allowed to take tests differently?

Y N Allowed to shorten assignments?

Y N Allowed to tape record?

Y N Must copy from board (or overhead projector)?

Y N Must keep a notebook?

PLEASE SKIP THE PERIOD THAT IS YOUR SLD RESOURCE ROOM PERIOD. Your comments written on the back would be greatly appreciated, and you may think of ways you are helped in classes that are not listed here.

# APPENDIX C

# MAILBOX HANDOUTS

COULD YOU

WRITE

AN

IEP ?

# CONTEST NOTICE

## STEAK DINNER FOR TWO

1. Write on card an explanation of IEP's -- the initials and the concept.

2. Drop card in IEP box by Thanksgiving holidays.

3. Judges: M. Maddox, D. Labud, B. Jones (our ESE teachers).

4. Winner announced next faculty meeting.

5. Drawing at faculty meeting if decision is difficult.

6. May team with a friend, but the prize is dinner for two.

## WHAT IS AN IEP?

IEP = individual education plan (legal; P.L. 94-142)

FOR: Each student in an exceptional program
- Learning Disabilities
- Mentally Handicapped
- Emotionally Handicapped (behavior)
- Vision Impairment
- Speech
- Homebound
- Physically Impaired
- Gifted

PURPOSE: Record current achievement level and goals for coming academic year

RE-DONE: Each and every year!

WHO? Parents, counselor, exceptional student teachers, and the county's staffing specialist.

## BEST DEFINITIONS BY TEACHERS:

1. An Individual Education Plan is a plan developed for each handicapped (including learning disabled) student compiled by a counselor, ESE teacher, and parents which outlines the most beneficial educational program for the year for that student. The IEP is reviewed and updated yearly.

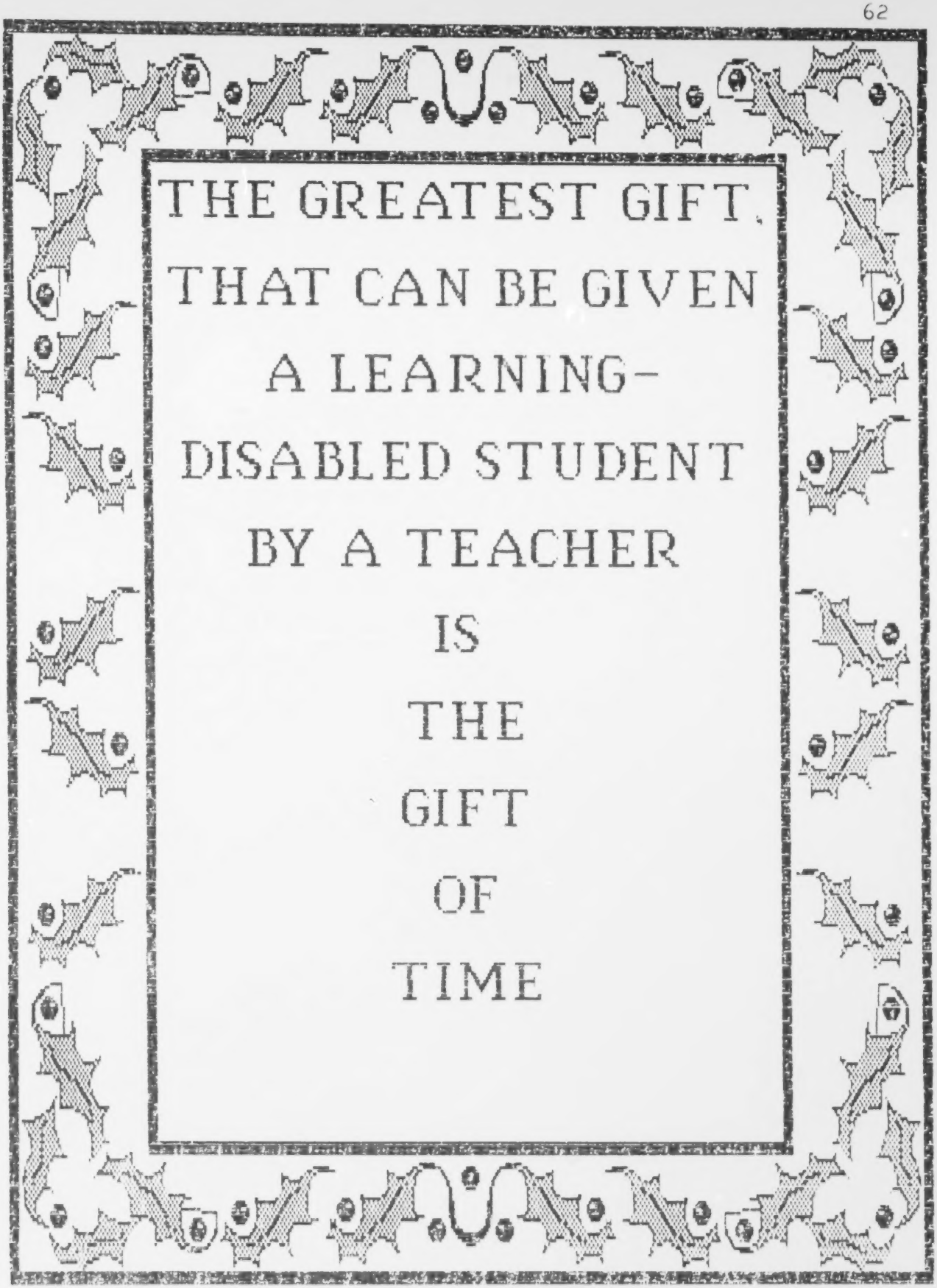
2. ...designed to meet the needs of the individuals as opposed to the needs of the group; based on the idea of identifying each student's strength and weakness then utilizing this information to the student's best interest...

3. It is the plan drawn up by ESE teachers, counselors, specialists, and parents on how best to suit an ESE student's needs.

4. ...a prescription for learning which is tailored to the individual student's needs...

5. ...outlines goals the student must meet and identifies the means by which success will be measured...

6. ...educational plan or program tailored to his specific needs and abilities...


THE GREATEST GIFT,
THAT CAN BE GIVEN
A LEARNING-
DISABLED STUDENT
BY A TEACHER
IS
THE
GIFT
OF
TIME

The ACT and the SAT exams for LD allow time extensions if IEP is current--quadruple time!!

# SHOW TIMES

9:00 TO 10:00

10:15 TO 11:15

1:30 TO 2:30

ROOM 710 JANUARY 20, 1992

***Tickets go in raffle box at the end of each showing for a free dinner for two at Bern's Steakhouse!***

LD is a hidden handicap because there is no outward appearance of the disability. Children with LD appear to be no different from their normal peers.

There is no clear and widely-accepted definition. Because of the multidisciplinary nature of the field, there is ongoing debate on the issue of definition, and there are currently 12 definitions appearing in professional literature--which agree on these factors:

-1- The LD have difficulties with academic achievement and progress, with discrepancies existing between a person's potential for learning and what he actually learns.

-2- The LD show an uneven pattern of development (language development, physical development, academic development).

-3- LD problems are not due to environmental disadvantages.

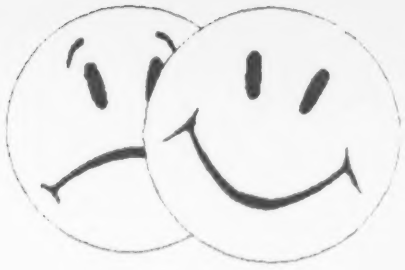
-4- LD problems are not due to mental retardation or to emotional disturbances.

LD = LAZY & DUMB

AND INDEED IT MAY SEEM SO TO THOSE WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND THEIR TENSION, ANXIETY, AND FRUSTRATION.

LD STUDENTS ARE OFTEN
DISCOURAGED, NOT DUMB,
AND HAVE IQ'S WITHIN
THE NORMAL RANGE.

LD STUDENTS HAVE HAD
RISK-TAKING KNOCKED
OUT OF THEM, WHICH MAY
MAKE THEM APPEAR TO
BE LAZY OR
UNMOTIVATED.



LD students, having learned to be wary of risk-taking, avoid volunteering. They don't like surprises! They have too often been shown sarcasm and derisive laughter. They have received less than their needed quota of positive reinforcement--the kind that builds self-esteem.

Is it any wonder that it becomes an obsession with the LD student to prove he is not the only one to make mistakes?

SHOULD IT SURPRISE US THAT AN LD STUDENT BECOMES EITHER A CLASS CLOWN OR A PASSIVE WITHDRAWAL?

MOTIVATION IS NOT THE

KEY TO OVERCOMING

LEARNING DISABILITY.

MOTIVATION REALLY
ONLY ENABLES US TO
DO TO THE BEST OF OUR
ABILITY WHAT WE
CAN ALREADY DO!

## TEST CONSTRUCTION

* Type or print the test. Leave lots of white space.

* For matching or fill-in-the-blank questions, write the definition first and the word choices last.

* Provide a word bank for fill-in-the-blank items.

* Break matching or fill in the blank questions into sections of five items.

* Use wording on the test that is the same as wording used in class.

* Multiple-choice and matching tests are often the best choice for discouraged learners.

* Tests should contain 20 to 40 items.

* Some groups benefit from having tests read aloud.

## MANAGEMENT TIPS

Send home letters detailing homework, classwork, and grading policies.

Use a variety of sources to determine grades:

- homework
- projects
- posters
- class discussions
- reports
- oral reports
- tutoring
- being tutored

Have students keep a record of their grades and teach them how to average grades.

Return classwork and tests promptly. Immediate feedback facilitates learning and increases motivation.

Give frequent short tests rather than one long test.

Provide a diagram (map, etc.) to label or to color for extra credit for students who finish early.

## MODIFICATIONS HELPFUL TO SPECIAL EDUCATION PUPILS

1. Use visuals wherever possible
2. Clear copies – color highlighters
3. Uncluttered paper format
4. Peer notetakers
5. Give out copies of lecture notes
6. Note sheets for films
7. Multiple choice & Matching: no long lists
8. Frequent and varied assignments for grades
9. Extra credit possibilities
10. Test orally
11. Allow tape recording
12. Team or group assignments
13. Hands on activities
14. Main points written on board
15. Simplify – Stick to the "meat"
16. Vary grade requirements
17. Allow testing with ESE teacher
18. Team or buddy sensitive student with ESE student
19. Arrange for success some of the time
20. Notebooks – can be helpful but are terrible for the disorganized LD pupil – if you insist on them, at least check them very, very often!

Distractible and short attention span are not interchangeable terms.

The distractible student pays attention to everything--noises, movements, colors, et cetera.

The student with a short attention span may pay attention to nothing.

LD pupils are usually easily distracted and benefit from shortened directions and assignments--or extra time in which to complete assignments.

The storage and retrieval functions of the brain comprise a wonderful system when working properly.

This system often gives trouble to the LD child. Associative and cognitive tasks do not combine.

Some LD pupils experience a word-retrieval problem known as dysnomia, others experience an arithmetic problem known as dyscalculia, and others experience a reading malfunction known as dyslexia.

Due to these problems, an LD pupil may need to rely on a tape recorder and other "extra help" tools in your class.

AH! WHAT A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VISION AND PERCEPTION!

The LD pupil can see and hear normally but cannot perceive. He has difficulty bringing meaning to oral or printed tasks unless a teacher helps him to correctly perceive the stimulus.

That teacher can be a peer tutor--think about that !

IEP: Individual educational plan, required by law for any exceptional student receiving services, and updated annually.

SLD: Specific learning disability--which may be in the area of visual-perceptual, auditory, or motor skills; although identified pupils usually have normal intelligence, they can be gifted or mentally handicapped; parttime students earn a standard diploma; full-time students earn a special diploma, taking special ed core classes.

EH : Emotionally handicapped (behavior disorder)

EMH: Educable mentally handicapped, of higher ability than trainable or profound: IQ above 50 but less than 75.

ADD: Attention Deficit Disorder, newest category in special education, sharing many of the characteristics of the learning disabled.

94-142: (PUBLIC LAW NUMBER 94-142)
Federal law that guarantees an appropriate education for handicapped students in the least restrictive environment.

| MYTH | REALITY |
| --- | --- |
| *The exceptional education teacher will tell the general education teacher what is wrong with the student.* | *There is much in this area that we do not understand, but we can focus on the effects of the learning problem.* |
| *The exceptional education teacher will cure the student.* | *The handicap will not go away; we try to minimize its impact.* |
| *The exceptional education teacher will plan infallible strategies for the classroom teacher.* | *The exceptional education teacher may not have the expertise about the general classroom. Both parties need to brainstorm together.* |

APPENDIX D

INSERVICE EDUCATION
EVALUATION FORM

INSERVICE EDUCATION
WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM

WORKSHOP TITLE Mainstreaming the Learning Disabled

LOCATION: High School DATE: 8/18/92

| | POOR | INADEQUATE | ADEQUATE | ABOVE AVERAGE | OUTSTANDING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. ORGANIZATION AND PREPARATION (format, sequence, materials, location, group size, etc.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. CONSULTANT EFFECTIVENESS (prepared, organized, knowledgable, communicated, enthusiastic, etc.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. QUALITY OF PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT (individual or group participation in worthwhile discussions, etc.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. RELEVANCY TO PERSONAL NEEDS (ideas, insights, skills, involvement met a personal need) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. APPLICATION VALUE (practical, applicable to classroom, worthwhile materials or ideas) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. OVERALL RATING (total effectiveness of the workshop) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

PLEASE ADD ANY COMMENTS, POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE, IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW. YOU NEED NOT SIGN YOUR NAME.